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# CHRISTIANITY IN PRACTICE

A SERIES OF SKETCHES DESCRIBING  
INSTITUTIONS AND TYPES OF SERVICE  
ON BAPTIST MISSION FIELDS ABROAD

*Published as occasion may require*

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Number Two

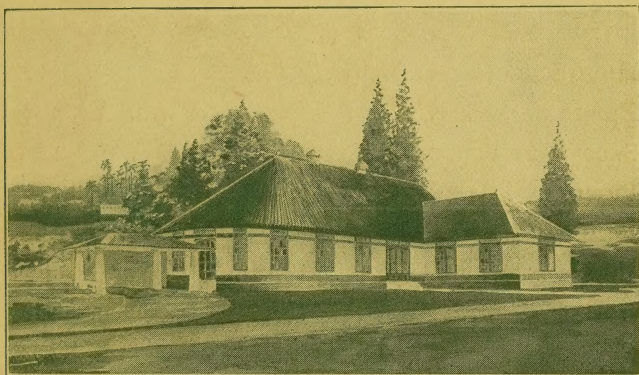
ASSAM

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## The Jorhat Christian Schools of Assam

By CHARLES H. TILDEN



Proposed New Building for the Bible School

AMERICAN BAPTIST FOREIGN MISSION SOCIETY  
Ford Building      Ashburton Place      Boston, Mass.

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# THE JORHAT CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS OF ASSAM

By CHARLES H. TILDEN



WORK in this article means strenuous labor. An occupation is a legitimate part of a Christian education, because work is educative and work is Christian. As a division of the Jorhat Christian Schools the School of Work is an essential feature, because it realizes *why* work is necessary; it has discovered *what* work is wise, and it appreciates *how* this work should be taught to be good mental training and be expressive of Christian principle.

## WHY WORK?

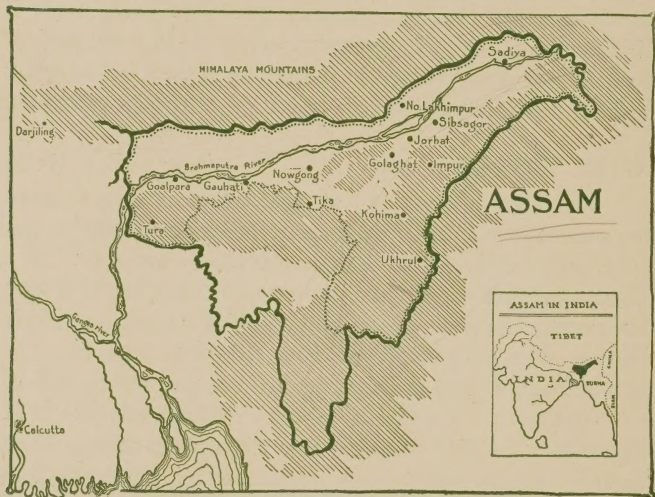
Pedagogy is good or bad as it trains or fails to train its pupils to think. The current pedagogy seeks to impart knowledge rather than to develop mentality. The traditional teacher is the fountain of knowledge at which his young hopefuls drink and become as wise as their master. An educated man is a thinking man but the best educated man is one who can execute his thoughts.

The Jorhat Christian School of Work believes that all work is capable of doing this if properly used. Boys in the carpentership learn fractions more easily than others because to hew and plane a board to one and a half inches in thickness by hand stimulates thought and gives expression to that thought by both the accurate and the inaccurate parts of his work. So, too, the farm, garden, the print shop, the school store, bank or office, and every other department of the School of Work becomes an effective feature of a real education. Why work? Good pedagogy demands it.

The Jorhat Christian Schools are primarily for Christian young men. Most of these are poor and it

costs money to go to school away from home where the pupil must buy his books, food and clothes. We are obliged to assist the pupils by "Workships" or paying wages for work. This is better than a gift for it displaces a spirit of begging by an attitude of self-reliance. It is paid to a student according to his skill, his scholarship and his character. Why work? The poverty of these Christian boys requires it.

This idea of work is not new. Our foremost educa-



Map of the Province Showing Baptist Stations

tionalists in western countries are working it out under western conditions. Educationalists in oriental countries have been experimenting for years on the problem. In the Jorhat Christian Schools work has been a feature for nearly ten years and in other stations even longer. The principle has been demonstrated to be sound. Why work? Experience commends it.

Industrially, Assam is spoken of as the backward



Province. Industrially all India is backward. Assam is rich in industrial opportunities. Its soils, its minerals, its growing things and its living things give it high rank. Its increasing population, rising in civilization, gives great economic opportunities. Why work? The industrial conditions of the country welcome it.

As contrasted with Hinduism which is a religion of thought, Christianity is prominently a religion of work. Hinduism has expressed itself in thought and ceremonies: Christianity expresses itself not only in thought but in ways unfamiliar to Hinduism, namely in every act of man. Ethics of Christianity finds ready expression in work. In the markets of Assam there is a kind of rice which brings a higher price than any other and is known commercially as Christian Rice. It is recognized as better and commercially cleaner than others and the heathen dealers have given it the name of the people from whom they purchased it. It is the aim of the school that the pupil in his work shall learn, not to exploit his fellows, but in the spirit of Christ to serve them. In the Jorhat Christian Schools each pupil every day has an hour of Bible and two to four hours of work. The work is an expression of the Scripture lesson. Christianity in the midst of heathenism needs this expression. Why work? **BECAUSE IT DEVELOPS CHRISTIAN CHARACTER.**

## **WHAT WORK?**

If our reasons for making "work" a part of a Christian education are sound, then the occupations which we shall choose must harmonize with those reasons.

The work must be educative to meet the demand of good pedagogy.

It must be remunerative to answer the call of poverty.

It must profit by the mistakes and successes of others everywhere to gain the endorsement of experience.

It must be suited to the needs of the people to be welcome to industrial conditions.

It must be ethical in treatment to meet the need of Christianity.

Our task is simple but difficult. We are to determine in the light of experience what occupations best meet the needs of the people, select such as can be made financially profitable, and adopt such teaching methods as will enable the pupil to execute his own stimulated thoughts, and make his work an expression of Christianity.

By a law of economics, a people's occupations represent the needs of that people at the state of culture in which they exist, because all animals naturally strive to supply their own needs. So the occupations of the people in Assam as shown in the last census report, represent the needs of the people of Assam. We find by careful examination of this census that some of these occupations, as farming, are so general among the people that instruction in them should be *universal*. Others seem to have *too few workers*, such as brick and tile making. Some are practiced *crudely*, but give promise of success if developed, such as boot and shoe making. Others are largely in the hands of *immigrants* who are not permanently settled in Assam. Carpentry and service in public administration are good examples of this class. Some occupations *oppress the people*, of which banking and trade are excellent examples. In still other occupations workers such as builders, printers, clerks, compounders, preachers and teachers are *in demand by our own mission activities*. This gives us six groups showing the basis of needs as follows:—Universal, too few, crude, foreign, oppressive and mission demands.

Reclassifying these occupations for teaching purposes, we find four classes, and of these the School of

Work will teach two, namely: industrial class and economics class, representing 81 occupations.

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| A. Industrial (using)     | B. Economic.       |
| 1. Things that grow.      | 8. Trade.          |
| 2. Things that live.      | 9. Administration. |
| 3. Things in the earth.   | 10. Business.      |
| 4. Chemical products.     | 11. Service.       |
| 5. Physical forces.       |                    |
| 6. Combinations of these. |                    |
| 7. Transport.             |                    |

For purposes of teaching, class A (Industrial) is classified according to the nature of the materials used in the industries. It is not impracticable to give elementary and practical instruction in 81 or even more occupations. For example:—in subclass 1, “Things that Grow,” representing 13 occupations, pupils will cut a stalk of jute, beat out the fibre, and twist it into a rope. This can all be done in a single hour and the pupils will have learned the elements of rope-making in a practical way, but they will not have become rope-makers. So, too, in sub-class 3, “Things in the Earth,” representing 13 occupations, pupils search and find certain kinds of clay, mix them with a proper quantity of sand, mould a brick, dry it in the sun and place it in the kiln for burning. The pupil learns the elements of brick-making in a practical way but he does not become a brick-maker. In this elementary and practical way all of the occupations will be taught. These occupations cover work in all the natural resources of earth, which the workman-pupil learns are man’s gifts from God. This elementary part of the School of Work is called the “*Industrial School*.” It does not attempt to teach a trade.

By the time a boy has passed the sixth year of the



elementary course he will have shown aptitude for some occupation in either the industrial or the economic group. He will then be allowed to select work in either the Artisan or Commercial School which are other parts of the School of Work, and which train *actual workers* in crafts or business. These courses are separate from the industrial course and cover only a few of the 81 occupations. The Artisan School teaches occupations in the Industrial, and the Commercial School teaches occupations in the Economic group. Both of these must be real commercial enterprises else the pupil could not actually learn to be a bread winner in his chosen occupation. The Artisan School will prepare boys in basketry, farming, gardening, dairying, poultry raising, wood working, metal working, leather working, pottery and brick making, weaving, tailoring, building, printing, transportation, baking, cooking and laundrying. The Commercial School will prepare workers in shorthand and typewriting, accounting, filing, correspondence, buying and selling, shipping business organization and organization. ]

## HOW WORK?

As stated in the early paragraphs of this last section, "work is an expression of Christianity." This statement is only relatively true, for work may express the exact opposite of Christianity. For example in our furniture shop a Bengali carpenter will cut a tenon small and fill the mortise with putty where it cannot be seen. Such work is an expression of heathenism. Our pupils are told that such a joint is a heathen joint, and that this shop does not permit the making of any but Christian joints. Honest joints are an example of Christianity. Our curriculum attempts to use all the available resources of earth and these must be presented as an interpretation of Christianity. Every department of the school, every



building, every foot of ground must be dedicated to Christ and every process must be sanctified by His spirit. Otherwise the school fails as a Christian school and becomes a school which merely teaches certain very useful facts and strengthens the thinking power of the young man who will soon be engulfed in the great whirlpool of heathenism where he will use his knowledge and his work as an expression of the exact opposite of Christianity. *All education is a positive danger unless dedicated to Christ.*



In the Jorhat Industrial Department

Education without Christianity will be confiscated by an opposite power and turned to evil ends.

In the Jorhat Christian High School when studying geography boys gather soils from different parts of the province and note that rocks, sands, clays and loams, have been variously distributed by the master mind of the Creator for the use of man. In the School of Work these same pupils note in the pottery and brick yard that clay is plastic and adhesive; and, filling sand into hollow piers to keep down the white ants, they note that the sand is mobile, insoluble and hard. That the motive of the

Creator is love for man and his desire that man should study out the secrets of creation is pointed out in these phenomena. From this truth they are taken another step in their lesson on soils as one of the "Things in the Earth." This time it is a lesson in road-making as a part of the study on "Transport." Their attention is called to the composition of a sticky, muddy road, and they note that it is mostly clay, plastic and adhesive as they had already learned. Or another road which has been washed out in the rains or is soft in the dry season they note is mostly sand, hard grains, but easily moved and insoluble. They are then asked to seek out God's secret that has enabled man to make a road firm in the rains and hard in the dry season so that draft animals may not suffer in drawing loads and man may be benefitted and made happier. The pupil is easily led to see that the adhesiveness and plasticity of clay may be used as a bond to cement together the hard, insoluble grains of sand, making the sort of road which, with proper care, will stand the test, and so man, working with God, has discovered a valuable secret.

These are examples of what is meant by a "Christian School," by "dedicating education to Christ" by having "every process sanctified by His Spirit." This method of work and teaching is the method of "*Christianity in Practice*." For an hour every day every pupil sits at the feet of Christ in the Bible School with the open book. According to Oriental ideas of religion this makes him a religious man for, "Is it not that he knows the Scriptures?" But according to Christian standards of religion he must be a doer and not a hearer only of the work. So, after an hour a day of Bible he has two to four hours of work where he is taught to put Christianity into practice.

# Christianity in Practice

A series of sketches describing  
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